Upgradation of East Coast Road

1567. DR. K. MALAISAMY; Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the status of Chennai-Cuddalore highway in view of the process of improving the East Coast Road from Kolkata to Kanyakumari and declaring it as a National Highway;

(b) what is the stage of declaring the stretch from Chennai to Athiramapattiriam as National Highway particularly when the road is already improved; and

(c) by when the stretch between Nagapattinam to Tuticorin would also be declared as National Highway?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING ROAD TRANSP0R7 AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) The road from Chennai to Pondicherry is a State road and maintained by Tamil Nadu Road Development Corporation on Build Operate and Transfer basis. The stretch from Pondicherry to Cuddaiore is a part of National Highway No. 45A.

(b) and (c) The Pondicherry-Nagapattinam portion of the Chennai-Nagapattinam-Athiramapattinam-Tuticorin road is a part of National Highway No. 45A and it is maintained from National Highway funds. In February, 2004, the Ministry has declared 7457 Kms. of State roads as National Highways including 425 kms. in Tamil Nadu. It is premature to indicate any time-frame for declaration of the balance portion of Chennai-Tuticorin road as a National Highway.

Road proposals from Tripura

1568. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR; Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSF'ORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleaseu to state:

(a) the status of the proposals put forward by the State Government of Tripura regarding new National Highways and Agartala By-pass on National Highway-44;

(b) whether substantial progress has been made uptil now;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, programme proposed to be followed soon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) to (d) In February, 2004, the Ministry has declared 7457 kms of State Roads in the country as National Highways. It is premature to indicate any time-frame for further declaration of National Highways. Out of total length of about 13.76 kms of Agartala Bypass, presently the work is in progress in the portion from km. 0.00 to 6.75. The physical progress on this project is 7% and it is likely to be completed by 2007.

Setting up of National Sea Waterways body

1569. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to set up a National Sea Waterways body on the lines of National Highway Authority;

(b) if so, the details of the proposed plan which would connect n^jor ports of the East and West coast; and

(c) how far this would help to improve the economy of the coastal area population?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPINGi ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI TR. BAALU): (a) Declaration of port channels as National Sea Waterways in a phased manner beginning with major ports and their development and maintenance through Central Govemment funding (on the lines of National Highways) is envisaged in the draft outline of the 'Sagar Mala' Programme as also in the draft of the Policy for the Maritime Sector (Ports, Shipping and IWT). However, there is no proposal to set up a National Sea Waterways body

(b) and (c) It is proposed to take up the Sethusamudram Ship Channel Project to provide a direct navigable route within India's territorial waters between the country's east and west coasts, which is different from the National Sea Waterways. This project is expected to lead to the emergence of associated and ancillary industries along the coastal areas and contributes to its overall economic development.

Road projects with NHAI

1570. MS. PRAMILABOHIDAR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an amount of Rs. 59,000 crores is proposed